

Try to be Nice by FlyingFairies

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Summary:

Max and Mike don't appreciate each other at the best of times, and alone in detention is their worst nightmare.

Try to be Nice

Author's Note:

I always wondered what happened to make Mike and Max friends, so I thought I'd fill something in. There's a massive gap between season 2 and 3 that's basically unaddressed and we never really see them together not arguing, but they were friends at the start of season 3. Realistically, it was probably just a gradual thing, but this is much more fun to write (and hopefully read), so I hope you enjoy.

Max Mayfield had been trying her absolute hardest not to get detention.

And yet, as the bell rang for the end of school, she trudged to Miss Olsen's classroom with the detention slip shoved in her jean pocket.

There was a very specific reason she didn't want detention. Because Mike Wheeler was going to be there.

She couldn't stand him. Like actually couldn't cope. Being in the same friend group, or 'Party' as Dustin insisted it was called, was painful. The glares every single fucking time she entered the room, as if she'd committed mass genocide moments before.

Worst of all, she didn't even know *why* .

She knew he had a thing about El. Not just a crush, proper issues that would probably be best addressed by a therapist, but you can't exactly tell the school counselor about how you're overly protective over a girl who the government doesn't know about.

There had been one time since the Mind Flayer that Max and Mike had been in a room alone. They were both early to AV Club, it had consisted of threats from both sides, ending when Will arrived just as Mike was telling Max that she shouldn't touch the equipment because it would probably start burning as soon as she did.

Max had had a brilliant comeback about how hot she was, as was thinking about how stupid Mike must have been to walk straight into that. But her and Mike had an unspoken agreement to not actually, full out fight, in front of the others. They were hardly civil, settling for insults and constant sarcasm, but they would always try to hide it amongst regular conversation, never starting an argument for the sake of it.

Still, she didn't like Mike.

That was a lie. She did like Mike, he just didn't like her.

But now she was stuck in detention with him for an hour.

"Mr Wheeler, you'll have a friend this evening." Miss Olsen announced as Max walked into the room. "Miss Mayfield, if you can take the desk beside Mr Wheeler please."

Max sighed as she sat down, leaning back on her chair and trying to avoid all eye contact with Mike. Which was fucking hard because he was glaring at her like she chose to be there.

"Now, I thought you could write some lines during this time. Really engrain it into you why you're here." Miss Olsen said, handing them both two sheets of paper.

Despite being a Miss, Miss Olsen was older than Max's mom and had grey hairs in her tight bun. She wore a plaid skirt and jacket with a white shirt underneath, the only thing changing about her daily appearance being the shade of beige the suit was in.

Max had her everyday in fourth period history, a class that drained any natural interest in the topic out of her. Made worse by the fact that Max sat next to Debbie Lochill (stupid, alphabetical seating charts), a girl who Max genuinely considered to be the most dull person in Indiana, which essentially made her the most dull person on Earth, because nothing was more boring than Indiana.

She'd gotten herself stuck in detention because she'd had a little bit too much of Debbie Lochill and told her to, in no uncertain terms, shut the fuck up. Unfortunately, Max was unaware that Debbie was a

ridiculous telltale, causing her cry out to Miss Olsen and parrot exactly what Max had said, which was hardly PG.

After being made to stay after class and receive a lecture that drifted around all of the problems with Max's behaviour (which had been piling up since Max moved to Hawkins), Max was handed a detention slip and sent on her way.

But now she was in a room with Mike Wheeler for an hour. Although she supposed it might be slightly better than listening to Debbie Lochill.

"Maxine, you will write 'I will be polite and courteous to my classmates.'" Miss Olsen told her, writing the line on the chalkboard, "And Michael, you will write 'I will not disrespect my teachers.' Is that understood?"

"Yes ma'am." They both drawled, Max barely shifting her eyes from the window she was staring out of.

She noticed Lucas, Will and Dustin all leaving and felt a pang of guilt. She'd was supposed to be going to the arcade with them, as Lucas found great enjoyment in watching her crush Dustin's high scores, but those plans had been canceled because of Debbie Lochill.

"Maxine, make a start please." Miss Olsen asked, staring at Max. Max looked up at her blankly.

"My name's Max." She said, slowly as if explaining it to a toddler. She wasn't entirely sure why she was picking an argument, now probably wasn't the time, but Miss Olsen was painfully fun to annoy.

"Max is a boy's name." Miss Olsen replied, setting the book she was reading onto the table, "And you are a young lady."

Mike snorted from beside Max, trying a failing to hide his laugh in a cough.

"With all due respect, Miss Olsen, I think Michael here is more of a lady than I am." Max answered back, throwing a disparaging look at Mike.

"Miss Mayfield, start writing, now." Commanded Miss Olsen, avoiding her first name. Max smirked, raised an eyebrow then picked up her pen, beginning to write.

It didn't take long for her hand to start aching and her mind to wander. Quietly, she placed her pen on the desk and let herself look out the window. Miss Olsen had her eyes glued to the essay in front of her; Dustin's, Max presumed, based on the messy handwriting that covered eight sides of paper. As far as she could remember, Max had scribbled out that essay the lunch before it was due and had barely covered on page. At least she did something, Max reasoned to herself, she was pretty sure Mike had missed that homework.

Max never missed homework. She did the bare minimum, sometimes guessing if she couldn't be bothered to find the answer in a book, but it was always done. If it wasn't, Neil would be on her back about it and that was never fun. The last time it happened, when she'd been too busy fighting literal monsters to complete the math worksheet, he'd stood over her while she worked at the kitchen table, flooding her ears with reminders of how fucking stupid she was.

She wondered what Mike's parents said when she missed homework.

Maybe they were fine with it, maybe they told him off or maybe they helped him finish it.

Without realising it, an image came into her mind. Mike in his basement, Nancy sat beside him with her guiding him through the questions, giving hints and prompts. Like a proper older sibling. Not like Billy, who barely looked Max in the eye, let alone help her.

"Miss Mayfield." Miss Olsen's scratchy voice pulled her out of her own head. "Please resume."

"Yes ma'am." Max muttered, looking back down at her page. She twirled the pen in her hand, still not writing, as Miss Olsen sighed pointedly.

"Miss Mayfield, do I need to keep you after-school tomorrow?" She asked, raising an eyebrow, and Max shook her head.

"No." She grunted, then met Miss Olsen's eyes which were glaring at her, "No ma'am." She corrected, sinking down in her chair and wishing the group would swallow her whole.

She could feel Mike's gaze on her as she grabbed her pen. Wanting more than anything for some kind of distraction to appear, she actually began to write because the idea of doing this all again the next day was too bad to even entertain.

Detention was uneventful for another forty minutes, before Mr Hammond rushed into the room and called Miss Olsen out.

As she left, they were given strict instructions not to make a sound.

"What do you reckon's happening?" Max asked, as soon as Miss Olsen walked down the hall. She leaned slightly closer to Mike and kept her voice down, but he only glared at her. She grinned, "Do you think it might be some kind of history related emergency? Maybe someone mistook George Washington for Alexander Hamilton?"

"Mr Hammond is an English teacher." Mike grunted, "Why would it be history related?"

"It was a joke, dumbass." Max laughed, standing up and wandering over to Miss Olsen's desk.

"Stop!" Mike told her, "You'll get in trouble if she comes back."

Max ignored him, flicking through the homework on her desk. She found her own essay, with a B- printed in red ink on the front, "Wow, I'm a secret genius." She told Mike, holding it up for him to see.

"Sit down Max." Commanded Mike, but Max only leaned against the desk and raising a red eyebrow.

"Why are you here, Wheeler?"

"None of your business." He mumbled. Max sighed and rolled her eyes.

"God, you're so boring, you know that right? What did you do?"

"I am not boring!" Snapped Mike, apparently Max had hit a nerve.

"Then what did you do?" She asked in a singsong voice, moving towards his desk, "C'mon, I won't tell anyone if you don't want me too."

"No!" Mike insisted, "Sit down!"

"You know, the more you tell me to sit down, the less I want to." Max laughed, closing the open door to the hallway. "I already know you 'disrespected a teacher' I just want to know details."

With Mike still glaring at her, she walked to the back of the classroom and read the display along the board, all why firing Mike with questions that he refused to answer.

At this point, he was being difficult for the sake of being difficult. Why El wanted him as a boyfriend she would never know.

"I'll tell you why I'm here." She said, settling down back on Miss Olsen's desk. Giving him a quick rundown of what happened with Debbie Lochill, she really hoped he would reciprocate with his own story.

"I'm still not telling you." Mike told her firmly, pulling a book out of his bag. He gave her one last look, then opened it and began to read.

What a nerd. Max thought, then an idea sprung to her head. Trying to hide the grin on her face, she snuck over to Mike's desk and ripped the book out of his hands.

With her finger holding his place, she flicked to the back and scanned the last few pages, climbing onto the desk to Mike couldn't reach her.

He was taller than her, but not tall enough, and she finished the pages quickly, gaining a rough guess of how the book ended.

"Tell me, or I'll let you know exactly what happens to Robbie Jackson and his robot dog."

"No, Max, you wouldn't dare!" Mike called, snatching the book back out of her hands.

"Try me." She said, smirking. Mike glared at her stubbornly and Max raised an eyebrow, "So basically Robbie's face to face with-"

"Fine!" Yelled Mike, "I called Mr Maddison an asshole because he stopped me from leaving."

"Why were you leaving?" Max asked, frowning.

"I wanted to see El." Mike answered quickly, looking away, "Go on, laugh, I don't care. You probably think that's stupid"

Max's face fell.

"That's not stupid. I bet you miss her."

"Yeah." Mike replied quietly.

They stood in silence for a few moments, both avoiding each others eyes before Max spoke.

"I miss my friends in California." She said, not looking up. "My best friend was called Nate."

"Sorry." Mike grunted, "I've got El so close, and you're miles away from all your friends."

"Not all of them." Max said, smiling slightly.

"No?"

"Well, there's a few, right here in Hawkins." She said, meeting Mike's eyes. "I've got Lucas, Dustin, Will and El."

"Yep." Mike said, then paused for a moment. "You've got me too."

"Yeah?" Max asked. She never knew if Mike actually considered her a friend.

"Yeah." Mike confirmed, "Don't know what we'd do without our zoomer."

"Probably be massive nerds." Max joked, making them both laugh. She then stuck out her hand to Mike, "Friends?"

"Best friends." Mike replied, shaking her hand.

As they did so, the door creaked open and they jump to their seats.

Max's had a wet patch from when she climbed onto the desk, and she cringed as the damp seeped through her jeans.

"Mr Wheeler, Miss Mayfield, can I ask why you were out of your seats?" She said, taking her place at her desk.

Max and Mike glanced at each other, and as Max opened her mouth to make an excuse, Mike answered for them,

"Leak, in the ceiling, dropped onto the floor." He rushed, pointing to a puddle beside Miss Olsen's desk that Max hadn't noticed before. Miss Olsen looked down at it, then up to the ceiling, which was in fact leaking, and sighed.

"Right, you two go fetch the janitor, then go home. It's nearly been an hour anyway."

"Yes ma'am." They both answered, swinging backpacks over their shoulders and dashing out of the classroom.

Stopping at Max's locker for her skateboard before visiting the janitor, Max asked Mike a question.

"Did you notice the leak before? It had no idea."

"No." He admitted, "But living in Indiana for thirteen years teaches you that most classrooms will have some kind of leak in them."

"Right." Max replied, smiling, "I think I have a fair bit of catching up to do in regards to life in Hawkins."

"Well, you've already covered monsters and other dimensions." Pointed out Mike, "Trust me, that's the hardest part."

"Really, because I'd argue that the pizza is worse." Max laughed, skating slowly beside Mike, who pulled an offended face,

"Excuse me, Max Mayfield, have you even tried Gamberini's?"

"Yes! That's the worse one." Argued Max, frowning.

"It's ran by an actual Italian!"

"Jersey isn't Italy, Wheeler, I hate to break it to you."

"You've had better pizza, I take it?" Mike challenged as they turned down another hallway.

"It's not hard. Besides the best pizza place in America was called Gio's Pizza, near where I lived in San Diego." She answered, doing a couple tricks on her skateboard to indicate that she was bored fo the conversation.

"I bet it's not." Replied Mike, knocking on the janitors door and Max stumbled out of an ollie, making Mike laugh.

Once they'd directed the janitor to Miss Olsen's classroom, Max argued for Gio's Pizza.

"One day, you can come to California and try it. Then you'll know I'm right." She said, dismounting to walk down the stairs.

"Fine, once we're sixteen we can drive to San Diego to try that pizza."

Mike said, "Because that's sensible."

"We could though, not just us, but a whole Party trip to California." Max suggested, "I'd like to show it to you all."

"Yeah, that would be fun." Mike agreed, smiling, "Providing we haven't been eaten by monsters before then."

"Nah, you won't be." Max assured him, grinning, "You've got zoomer here for you."

She pushed the ground with her foot and skated down the road, her house being the opposite way from Mike's, and couldn't wipe the stupid grin off her face.